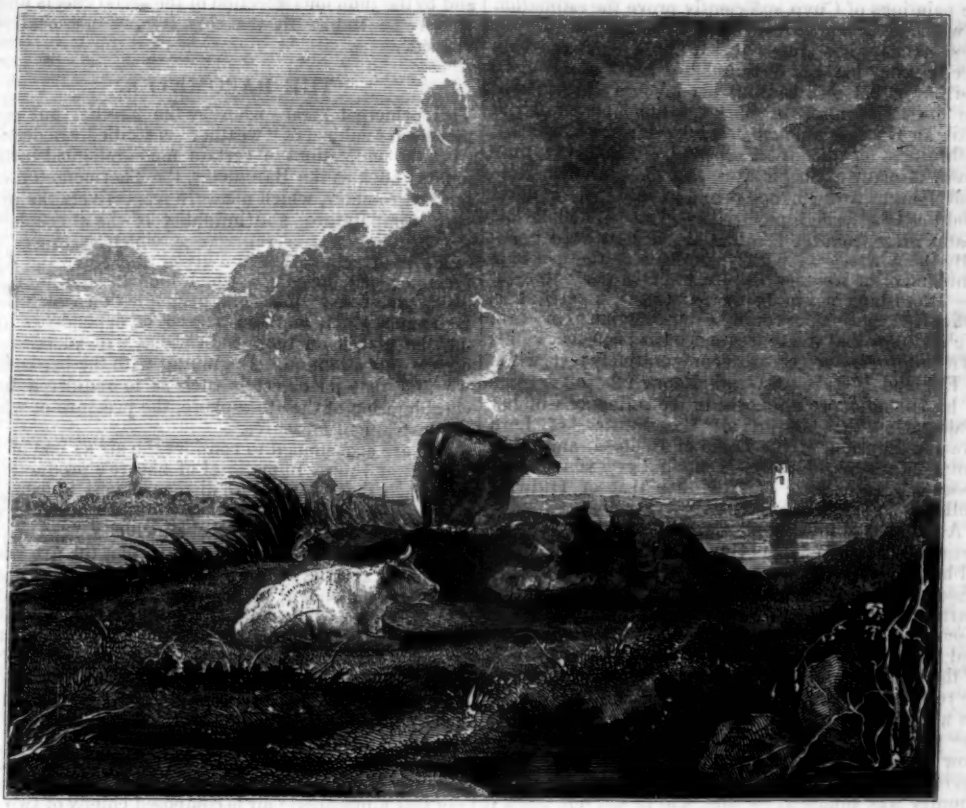


[Landscape and Cattle.—Cuyp.

GRATUITOUS EXHIBITIONS OF PICTURES.

DULWICH COLLEGE

Of that very eminent artist Albert Cuyp or Kuyp so little is known, that, save the date and place of his birth, nothing appears to have been recorded. He was the son of Jacob Gerutze Kuyp, a landscape-painter of considerable eminence at Dort, and a pupil of Abraham Bloemart. Jacob was famous for having founded in that city, in conjunction with J. Van Hasselt, Cornelius Tegelberg, and J. Grief, the Academy of Painting of St. Luke, in the year 1642. Albert was born at Dort in 1606, and received his early instructions from his father, but the style of painting he adopted differs in many most essential respects from that of the elder Cuyp. Nor do their choice of subjects less vary, for whilst those of the father are almost exclusively devoted to landscape composition in its most strict and confined sense, the pictures of the son afford us representations of nearly all the several shades of familiar life. The interiors of stables, of farriers' shops and riding-houses, views of market-places and other localities of public resort, landscapes with buildings, sea-pieces, and occasionally some compositions consisting chiefly of human figures, are among the productions of his pencil. The most frequent choice of subject in which he indulged was that wherein he could show his intimate knowledge of animal life, as in the instance at the head of this paper, which consists of a group of cattle reposing in the rich glow of the setting sun.

Description of the subject of Mr. Jackson's engraving is needless, although the principle of composition adopted by the painter may be very usefully commented on. In the greater number of the paintings of Cuyp, he aims at and most triumphantly attains to a breadth and splendour of effect unaided by strong contrast of light and shade. In this work, however, he proceeds upon a very different method, for he has thrown the whole foreground under the effect of incidental shadow, and rendered it entirely distinct from the middle and extreme distance. There is nothing more difficult of attainment than a bold relief of light and shade in landscape composition, without any apparent violation of the obvious rules of nature. Yet here we have a picture severed as it were into two distinct parts, and so skilfully managed that the mind is at once convinced of its unswerving truth. This incidental shadow to which we allude arises from a cloud intervening between the source of light and the object represented, that cloud not being seen within the limits of the picture itself. The use of this means of attaining effect is more generally used by the Dutch, the Flemish, and the English landscape-painters, than by those of any other schools. Indeed there are not wanting critics who will not allow that its adoption is within the legitimate limits of artistic management. Yet we think it would be difficult to find any one who has enjoyed the true pleasure of viewing an extensive prospect who has not again and again witnessed the exact effect which is here so admirably produced by Cuyp in the picture under notice. Nor can there be many who, having beheld that effect, are at a loss to understand the real value of its delineation.

The terms of admiration in which writers of all classes at the present day indulge when speaking of

the paintings of Cuyp, sufficiently prove the estimation in which he is held as an artist. Yet strange as it may seem, it is no less true that it is but a comparatively recent taste that has distinguished his extraordinary merit. In his own country his labours were held at the lowest estimate in market value, and it was not until an English amateur, struck with the wonderful faithfulness of the artist's pencil, became the purchaser of many of his pictures, that the dealers in Holland thought it worth their while to send them as commodities to a foreign pictorial market. Whether this apathy arose from the fact that his subjects were generally those which were daily familiar to the eye of a Dutchman, or whether from a want of perception of the astonishing power of the painter, it is perhaps as difficult to guess as it would be unprofitable to inquire. We do know that the consequence has been that in his own country his pictures are comparatively rare, while in England they abound; and although there are some of his splendid performances in the collections of her Majesty, of the Marquis of Westminster, of Lord Francis Egerton, of the Duke of Bedford, and other eminent amateurs, there is no gallery which possesses a greater store of them than that of Dulwich College.

A close, arduous, and vigilant attention to the changes of nature enabled Cuyp to represent her under all her varieties of aspect, and in all the vicissitudes of season and temperature. The freshness of spring, the warmth of summer, the glow of autumn, and the chilly discomfort of winter were alike delineated with ease and truth. The first blush of morning, the sultry heat of the mid-day sun, and the dewy eves appear rather to be reflected on his canvas than transferred by his hand. In all, whether we consider the season of the year or the period of the day he would represent, we observe how truly he has mastered all the difficulties which surrounded him. The homely landscape of his native country was sufficient for him, and he did not think it necessary to invest it with any adventitious aids. The sedgy banks of the Maes inspired him with a feeling of nature, and he only required to add those peculiar effects of light and dark to make his compositions such as he knew were most fitting for the artist's choice.

We can do no better than transfer to this place the judicious remarks of Dr. Waagen on the merits of Albert Cuyp. "The pictures of this master," he observes, "are the most splendid proofs that the charm of a work of art lies far more in a profound and pure feeling of nature, in the knowledge and masterly use of the means of representation which art supplies, than in the subject itself; for otherwise how would it be possible from such monotonous natural scenery as Holland affords, where the extensive green levels are broken only by single trees and ordinary houses, and intersected by canals, to produce such attractive variety as their pictures offer? How could it happen that so many pictures, even of eminent masters, such as J. Both and Pynaker, who represent the rich and varied scenery of Italy, have less power to touch our feelings than those of Kuyp, Ruysdael, and Hobbima? In elevation of conception, knowledge of aërial perspective, with the greatest glow and warmth of the serene atmosphere, Kuyp stands unrivalled, and may justly be called the Dutch Claude." No doubt this profound critic limits his appellation of the Dutch Claude in respect to the magnificent effects of atmosphere in which Cuyp indulged; for there can certainly be found no two painters of landscape who more vary in the comparative elevation of their compositions. Claude invests his subjects, majestic as they are by nature, with a veil of natural simplicity; whilst, on the other hand, Cuyp elevates them by the natural tints of his pencil, and by the judicious selection of the aërial effects under which he thinks fit that his composition shall be viewed.

THE BAROMETER.

The principal means whereby the familiar but comprehensive subject of "weather" is studied, are derived from the indications of certain meteorological instruments; such as the Barometer, the Thermometer, and the Hygrometer, which measure respectively the pressure, temperature, and humidity of the atmosphere; the Pluviometer, or rain-gauge, which measures the quantity of rain fallen in a given time; and the Anemometer, or wind-gauge, which indicates the force and direction of the wind. The principles on which these instruments act, and the degree of dependence that may be placed on their indications, will successively occupy our attention. Beginning with the barometer, we find that its object is such as to require a brief consideration of the atmosphere, the pressure of which the instrument measures.

We are accustomed to consider the air as one of the lightest and most immaterial of nature's productions; insomuch, that whatever we disregard most, is deemed a "trifle light as air." But when we find that death will ensue if we are deprived of that air which we can neither see, nor feel, nor taste, nor smell; that the fire which warms us, and the candle which illuminates our apartment, are dependent on it; that the whole vegetable, as well as the whole animal world, equally depend on the air for their continued existence and support; that without the air no sound could be heard, and no light diffused; that a hurricane is nothing more than this air in motion; and finally, that air presses on the human body with a weight of many tons,—we must then cease to regard the air as a "trifle."

The chemical constitution of the atmosphere need not engage much of our attention; but it will suffice to say that atmospheric air is composed chiefly of two expansible gases, oxygen and nitrogen, in the proportion of one part of the former to four of the latter. These are the two main ingredients without which air never exists; but there are several subsidiary bodies found more or less suspended or dissolved in the air. Among these, vapour of water exists in considerable quantity. To a much smaller extent carbonic acid is also found, resulting from respiration, combustion, and fermentation. The properties of these component ingredients are very different. Oxygen is a powerful supporter both of life and of combustion; and, besides existing in air, is abundantly diffused throughout all nature. Nitrogen is altogether inert, supporting neither life nor combustion; and its use, as we at present understand it, seems to be to dilute the oxygen, and thus modify the exceedingly active properties of the latter. Carbonic acid will support neither life nor combustion; and hence the quantity of it which is constantly being produced by respiration and combustion would be fatal to us, but for a beautiful provision whereby this gas is soluble in water, and capable of being absorbed by plants, which give out pure oxygen, and thus tend to purify the air.

Although the particles of air are so far repelled from one another as to give to the whole a transparent aëriform state, yet they are all attracted by the earth in conformity with the law of gravitation—they all possess *weight*, which is but another name for one of the effects of gravitation. As we ascend from the surface of the earth, this force diminishes, and the air becomes more and more rare, until at the height of forty or fifty miles its presence is supposed to cease. It may be asked how we know that air possesses weight, since the common modes of determining weight are here of no avail? To this it may be answered, that if a thin ves-

sel be first weighed when full of air, then taken to the air-pump and exhausted of its air, and afterwards again placed in the balance, it will weigh less the second time than the first. The difference is small—one hundred cubic inches of air weighing only thirty-one grains—but still it is sufficient to lead to important consequences. It is found that a column of air, resting on the surface of one square inch at the level of the sea, weighs no less than fifteen pounds; and this is the weight which actually presses upon every square inch of surface on the earth, as well as upon all animals and bodies moving on the earth. This pressure, too, is the more remarkable and important, in being manifested in every direction, upwards, downwards, and laterally. Indeed, it is this circumstance which prevents the human body from being crushed by the enormous pressure, for there is a counter pressure exerted by the air and other fluids occupying the numerous cavities of the body.

The discovery of these important facts respecting the weight of the air was so closely connected with the invention of the barometer, that we may regard them as almost simultaneous. The circumstances are said to have been these:—Some Italian pump-makers, finding that water would not rise higher than thirty-three feet when the air was exhausted from the pipe or barrel, applied to Galileo for an explanation of the cause. Galileo's mind was pre-occupied with some confused notions respecting nature's "abhorrence of a vacuum," and he gave an answer in conformity with those notions. Torricelli, however, imagined that the weight of the air might possibly act as a counterbalance to the water in the pump, enabling it to rise to a certain height and no higher; and in order to test the truth of this opinion, he filled a tube about three feet long with mercury, then placing his finger on the open end of the tube to prevent the escape of the mercury, he inverted it, and placed the open end in a vessel containing mercury. On removing his finger, the mercury in the tube, after a few oscillations, sank until it presented a column about twenty-eight inches in height.

Now what is the just inference from this experiment? Mercury we know to be about fourteen times as heavy as water; so that twenty-eight inches of the former are equal in weight to about thirty-three feet of the latter, the diameters being equal; and as thirty-three feet was the height to which the water rose in the pumps in question, Torricelli rightly concluded that the same cause, *i.e.* the pressure of the atmosphere, determined the height both of the mercurial and of the aqueous columns. A column of air reaching to the upper stratum of the atmosphere was hence deemed to be equal in weight to a column of water thirty-three feet high, or a column of mercury twenty-eight inches high, the diameters being all equal.

Thus did Torricelli construct a barometer and make an important scientific discovery by the same experiment; and the barometer which he made is undoubtedly the simplest form of the instrument. No one but a skilful philosophical-instrument maker can make a barometer fit for service; but a long glass tube and a bottle of mercury will enable any one to show the principle on which a barometer acts. It is simply this:—While the tube is apparently empty, it is really filled with air, but on pouring mercury into the tube, most of the air is driven out; the tube then being inverted into a cup of mercury (the open end being stopped during the invertion), the mercury does not sink entirely into the cup, but remains to a certain height in the tube. The atmosphere is pressing on the mercury in the cup, tending to force it up the tube, while the very small portion of air existing in the upper part of the tube exerts but a feeble downward pressure. If a perfect vacuum existed above the mercury in the tube (which is impossible in such a rough experiment), the column of mercury would be, on an average, about thirty inches high at the level of the sea, and this column would decrease according as there was more air in the upper part of the tube.

In order to determine still more clearly the influence of the atmosphere in counterbalancing the weight of the mercurial column, Pascal carried a barometer to the mountain of Puy de Dôme, in Auvergne. At the foot of this mountain, the mercury stood at a height of twenty-six and one-fourth (French) inches; and Pascal imagined that the height ought to be less when the instrument was taken to the top of the mountain, on account of the shortening of the column of air. The mercury, in accordance with this opinion, sank to twenty-three and one-sixth inches, thus showing that the pressure of the air is less as we attain a greater altitude.

When the barometer was thus established as a measurer of the weight of the air, attempts were made to convert it into an index of the weather, by observing how far the rise or fall of the mercury in the tube was connected with any particular state of the weather. In the well-known *wheel-barometer*, or weather-glass, the tube is bent round at the bottom, so as to form a siphon with two unequal legs, the longer of which is closed, and the other open. When the atmospheric pressure is great, it depresses the mercury in the shorter leg of the siphon, and thereby drives it up the longer, and a small float, which is placed on the open surface of the mercury in the smaller tube, is depressed. This float is connected with the index-hand on the dial face of the barometer, and turns it round to the right or left, as the case may be. The dial-plate is graduated to inches and parts of an inch; and it is so arranged that the index-hand shall point to that graduated division which expresses the height of the mercurial column. So far all is well; but when we come to the words "rain," "fair," "set fair," &c., engraven on the dial-plate, we are taught to expect that rain, &c. are never-failing accompaniments of these particular indications on the barometer. Now this assumption is very fallacious, for fine weather may occur at a time when "rain" is indicated on the barometer; and, moreover, a change of *altitude* in the place of observation will change the height of the barometric column without the action of any of those causes which produce rain. The real truth is, that so far as the oscillations of the barometer are indicative of changes of weather, we must look at the tendency of the mercury to rise and fall, and not to the particular height at which it stands; without an attention to temperature, likewise, all barometrical indications are very doubtful.

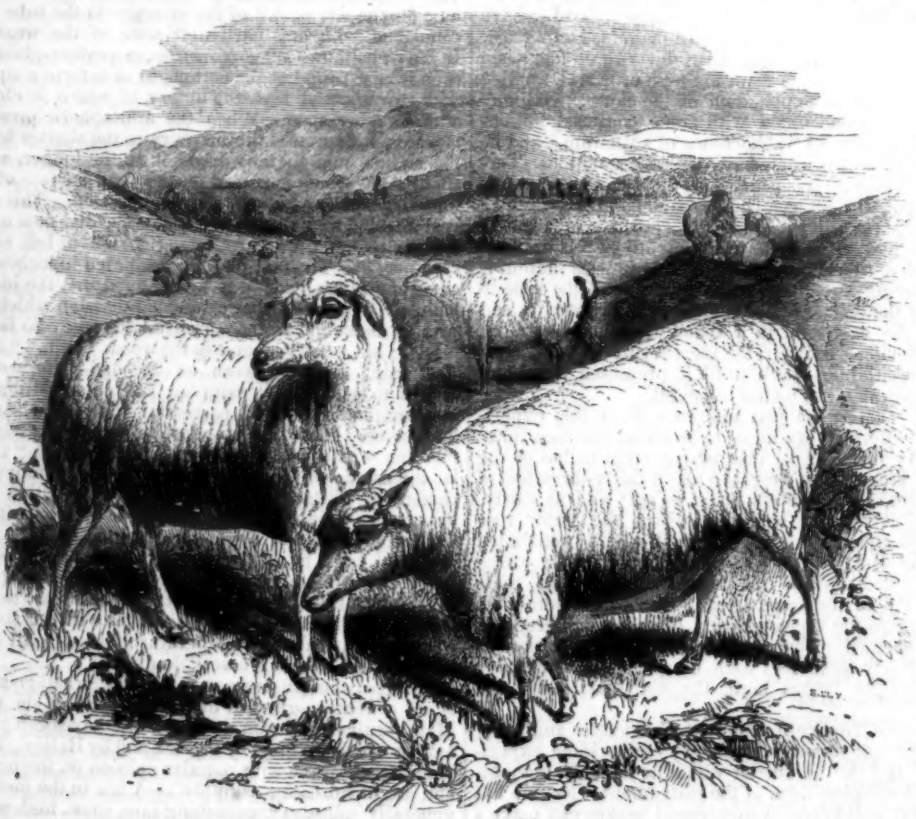
Most persons are now aware that the "weather-glass" is *not* a weather-glass in the proper sense of the term. Many "rules" for using the barometer have been given, among which are those by Patrick and by Halley. These rules nearly agree with popular opinion on the matter, and are in substance as follow:—A fall in the mercury generally indicates approaching rain, snow, high winds, or thunder. A very high wind, whether accompanied by rain or not, is frequently connected with the lowest state of the barometer; but of the various winds in this country, the north-east causes the least depression. When the mercury either rises or falls pretty steadily for two or three days together, a long continuance of settled weather frequently follows—fine and dry in the former case, and rainy in the latter; and, on the contrary, frequent fluctuations in its height are incompatible with an equable state of the weather.

There is undoubtedly some truth in these rules, but they must be received with caution; for the time has not yet come for predicting with certainty the sort of

weather which will follow from a certain change in the barometer. One of the most singular phenomena connected with barometric indications is, that during what we call *heavy*, rainy weather, the air appears to be lighter than at other times, since it will not support so high a column of mercury. This we shall have occasion to advert to when treating of the moisture in the air, in connection with the hygrometer. The use of the barometer is more valuable at sea than on land, probably on account of the absence of the disturbing influence of islands, mountains, &c. The marine barometer is a really valuable instrument to the mariner, as, from a sudden fall in the mercury, he may infer the approach of a storm, and may make the necessary arrangements before the storm comes on. Dr. Arnott vividly describes a scene at sea, where the crew of a vessel were surprised at receiving orders to make preparations for a coming storm, at a time when the atmosphere was beautifully clear and brilliant. The captain had noticed an extraordinary fall in the barometer, whence he inferred the approach of a storm; and the result fully justified the precautions he had taken.

While, therefore, we guard against the fallacies of the common weather-glass, we must fully admit the importance of the barometer, when taken in conjunction with other instruments, as an aid in meteorological inquiry; and it is to increase this utility that barometrical observations are made and registers kept in various parts of the world. It is hoped that from a large mass of such registered observations philosophers may one day deduce the laws whereby the pressure of the atmosphere fluctuates; meanwhile, the rough rules given above may serve approximately to show what kind of weather seems likely to result from a particular state of the barometric column, whatever may be the unexplained causes of that state.

The barometric averages, in the monthly supplements to our last volume, indicate the average heights of the barometer, for the month mentioned, at London, derived from the experience of past years.



Long-Woolled Sheep.]

BRITISH SHEEP.

[Concluded from page 178.]

The middle-woolled sheep include the South-Down, the Dorset, the Norfolk, the Suffolk, and the Cheviot breeds, together with several others, and which were formerly short-woolled. The length of the staple is on the average three and a half or four inches.

That the improvement of the old short-woolled sheep into a middle-woolled race is an advantage in every sense, especially as the short wool used exclusively in the manufacture of fine cloths is abundantly supplied from foreign '*growers*' (as the term is), no one can doubt. Of this race, one of the first is the improved South-Down breed depasturing on the long range of chalky hills extending from the sea-coast of the Isle of Thanet and the cliffs of Dover through Kent and Sussex. Formerly, this breed, as Mr. Ellman states (*Libr. of Agricult. Knowledge*), was of small size, far from possessing a good shape, and late before they were capable of being fattened; now, however, they are greatly improved both in shape and constitution

"They are smaller in bone, equally hardy, with a greater disposition to fatten, and much heavier in carcass when fat. They used seldom to fatten till they were four years old, but it would be a rare sight to see a pen of South-Down wethers at market more than two years old, and many are killed before they reach that age." The South-Down sheep is in fact the model of what a hill sheep ought to be, and the flesh in fineness of grain and flavour is peculiarly excellent. The wool is of a very useful quality, but is both larger in fibre and less numerously serrated than the short Saxony, and does not therefore possess such a felting power; hence, it is rarely used in the manufacture of fine broad-cloths. Still, from its fineness and felting powers compared with the wool of many other middle-woolled breeds, it is highly esteemed,—and for flannels and worsted goods in general is extensively employed. In Surrey, Hampshire, and Berkshire, the South-Downs have either superseded or been blended with the old short-woolled sheep.

Dorsetshire possesses its own breed, encroached upon, however, by the South-Downs. The males have large spirally twisted horns, and the females have also horns, but much smaller than those of the male. Neither the wool nor the flesh equals that of the South-Down breed. The old Norfolk breed of middle-woolled sheep is very valuable, but it is rapidly giving way to the South-Down. The rams are distinguished by long spiral horns, those of the ewes and wethers being smaller; the flesh is remarkably fine, and the wool delicate and felts well. The figure of these sheep is tall and slender; the legs are long, and the face and limbs black or mottled. The general aspect is wild and animated. This breed thrives on the coarsest pasturage. The wool is not used in fine broad-cloths, but is used in such as are of inferior quality, and in woollen stuffs generally.

In Suffolk the South-Down breed prevails. The black-faced and horned sheep of Westmoreland, Cumberland, and various parts of Scotland, as Lanarkshire, belong to the middle-woolled section. With respect to their wool, these sheep do not rank high; it exceeds in length that of the middle-woolled breeds generally, but is harsh and coarse; to compensate for this, these sheep are very hardy, have an admirable contour, and the flesh in fineness of grain and delicacy of flavour equals either the South-Down or the Welsh mutton.

The Cheviot breed is very distinct from the common mountain or black-faced race, with which it is on all sides immediately surrounded, these two races dividing the north between them.

The Cheviot breed is hornless, and the general contour is excellent,—the shoulders are full, the body round and long, and the limbs small-boned. The mutton is in great esteem; and the wethers average sixteen, eighteen, or even twenty pounds weight per quarter. It appears from the testimony of practical farmers, that the attention paid to the improvement of this breed, in reference to the condition of the carcass, has been followed by a deterioration in the quality of the wool, which is said to have been formerly capable of entering into the manufacture of fine cloths. Still, however, the wool is good, though inferior to that of the South-Downs. It far surpasses that of the black-faced breed, and as the Cheviot race is equally hardy and as capable of sustaining cold as the former, and is content with the alpine plants of the bleak hills and mountains, it will soon supersede the black-faced breed, as it has already done in the forest of Ettrick and the whole of Selkirkshire, and even Sutherland. The foreknowledge which these sheep possess of approaching storms, and the assiduity with which, while the shepherd dreams of no impending evil, they will seek a place of shelter and security, are curious traits in their history. It is thus that they often warn the shepherd, by the display of this instinct, wisely implanted within them, and lead him to add his precautions to those which they have themselves adopted. In spite, however, of the vigilance of the shepherd and the instinct of the sheep, many often perish, buried beneath towering snow-drifts, and sometimes whole flocks are lost. It often happens that sufficient shelter cannot be obtained, the flock crowd together for the purpose of mutual warmth, and are soon covered beneath the snow. If this does not occur, the lambs, unable to endure the severity of the storm, perish, and the mothers, bewildered, wander about seeking their offspring, till they themselves sink exhausted with their efforts and distress. With but little food, sheep can remain for many days buried beneath the snow, but where this cannot be obtained, the period of endurance is proportioned to the strength of the animal's constitution and the intensity of the cold. In the winter of 1800, a sheep near Kendal was buried in the snow for thirty-three days and nights, without the possibility of moving, and yet survived; and a sheep in Cumberland was buried for thirty-eight days. When extricated, it was found to have eaten the wool off both its shoulders, and its frame was reduced almost to a skeleton. By due attention, however, it gradually recovered.

Having thus specified some of the more important of the middle-woolled breeds of sheep in our island, most of them, or all, derived from the old short-woolled breeds by a system of judicious management, we shall now take a hasty survey of the long-woolled breeds, of which the plate at the head of this article gives an appropriate illustration.

As we have already stated, the middle wool varies, in different breeds, in fineness and in its power of felting. Long wool is much more uniform, and for this reason, that it is the produce of the Leicester race, and of races with which the Leicester race has become completely intermingled. "All long-woolled sheep," says Mr. Youatt, "both in appearance and in fleece, are becoming one family." Long wool, which has lately very much improved, it being the aim of the breeder to render it finer (at the expense of its length, which it will bear), is characterized by strength and transparency, but it is deficient in the power of felting. Its average length is about eight inches. This applies more particularly to that sort called the long-combing wool; there is, however, a variety of long wool which approximates to the middle wool, and termed the short-combing wool, which is somewhat shorter than the other, finer, and more disposed to felt. The long-combing wool is used in the manufacture of hard yarn, and for purposes in which length and firmness are essential; the other for stuffs of a softer texture, and for hosiery goods. We have alluded to the Leicester breed as the typical example of the long-fleeced races, but it is to be observed that this breed is an improvement upon a heavy, ill-made, and coarse-woolled race, formerly spread over all our midland counties. Lincolnshire also had a breed of sheep celebrated for their fine long wool; but this breed, defective in form, and yielding mutton of an inferior quality, is now greatly improved, and in fact is blended with the new Leicester sheep.

It is not within our province to follow out the changes which have already taken and are still taking place among the long-woolled breeds of sheep, for which our island is expressly celebrated, and in which neither France nor Belgium can at all compete with the English sheep-graziers. To those who wish to gain an acquaintance with this part of the subject, we recommend Mr. Youatt's valuable work on sheep, where he

will find much information and abundant reference to various writers on agricultural topics.

There is, however, one question which suggests itself, and which we cannot omit to notice. As far as records serve us, it would seem that a long-woolled and a short-woolled (now middle-woolled) race of sheep have tenanted our island from the earliest times. Now to what are we to attribute this original difference? Are the two races descended from different primitive sources, or have food and soil gradually produced the differences which have been so long maintained? No one, we think, will hesitate to say the latter; impossible as it may be to follow step by step the progress of the change, or to determine the *modus operandi* of the causes contributing to effect it. It is, however, very remarkable that it is only in animals which have been so long domesticated that we cannot tell their primeval origin, and which there is reason to think are factitious beings (that is, the produce of different, but still closely allied species commingling together), that these extreme variations as to size, figure, and length and quality of fur are most decidedly observable. We see these varieties in the dog; from the silky long-haired spaniel of Spanish race, to the close-haired old setter of the same country; from the woolly French poodle, to the mâtin; from the rough English water-dog, to the mastiff: so in the sheep we find a short-fleeced breed, with the filaments of the wool peculiarly fine and numerously serrated; a still longer fleeced breed, again subdivided into many minor varieties, having the wool fine, and more or less capable of felting, or, in other words, more or less numerously serrated; and a long-woolled race of old standing, in which the wool, but thinly serrated, is inferior in felting properties, but of great value to the woolcomber. But further, as the mixture of a long and silky-haired breed of dogs with one of close hair does not improve the coat, the young resembling, some the male, some the female, but not equalling them in their excellences; so the crossing of long-woolled and short-woolled sheep leads to no good results; and, as with dogs, the improvement of each breed depends on a judicious and careful selection of the best and purest of that breed, by which the properties distinguishing it may be developed to their maximum in their progeny.

In England the sheep is now only valuable for the sake of its wool and flesh, but in various parts of both Europe and Asia the milk of the ewe has been used from the earliest times, either pure or curdled, as an article of diet. Formerly, in many parts of England, cheese was made from the milk of the ewe, and the ewes, to the injury of the lambs, were milked regularly, as described in the 'Odyssey,' and, at a later æra, by Virgil:—

> "He next betakes him to his evening cares,
> And sitting down, to milk his ewes prepares;
> Of half their udders eases first the dams,
> Then to the mothers' teats submits the lambs.
> Half the white stream to hardening cheese he press'd,
> And high in wicker baskets heap'd; the rest,
> Reserved in bowls, supplied the mighty feast."
>
> Pope, '*Odyss.*,' lib. ix.

To the process of shearing we need scarcely allude; all are familiar with the manner in which the removal of the fleece is effected, and it would seem that in the earliest patriarchal ages the same process was in use. Among the Romans, however (and the practice has been but lately discontinued in the Orkney Islands, and is, perhaps, still prevalent in Iceland), the wool was torn off the animals, and, as Pliny states, they were kept for three days previously without food, in order that the wool might be the more easily detached, their bodies being exhausted. In his time, however, the practice of shearing had begun to supersede this cruel and unjustifiable method. It gave, however, origin to the word *vellus* (fleece), from *vello* (to pull away), and the hill termed Velleia was the ancient spot on which this cruelty was perpetrated.

With us the season of sheep-shearing is a season of rejoicing, and the manner in which the important work is conducted, and the dexterity of the shearers, are, to those not accustomed to rural life, replete with interest and amusement. It is, indeed, a pleasing spectacle to see a large flock of snow-white sheep collected together, and in turn losing their soft fleece, rolled into an unbroken and well-arranged whole, beneath the shears of the shearer: the picture is full of poetry, and he must be destitute alike of taste and patriotism that can look coldly upon it.

To enter into a disquisition on the commercial importance of the sheep, its connection with national prosperity and international relationships, is not our place. We leave this to the political economist.

Before we close, let us again revert to our starting point—the question as to the origin of the domestic sheep. It is clear that we cannot identify it with any wild species with which we are yet acquainted. If such exists, it is most probably to be found on the mountains of Armenia,—but this is problematical,—and there is some ground for supposing that, though the sheep of every region intermingle with each other, they have descended from different primitive origins. The subject is full of obscurity. It is indeed strange that while history teems with the accounts of battles, massacres, invasions, the reigns and the crimes of kings, it throws no light upon the domestic animals which man has reclaimed. The motives which led man to attempt this important work, the manner in which he accomplished it, the characters and native abodes of the species selected, are buried in silence. The subject was too mean for history,—the actors too humble to be noticed; but thus it ever is, that the glare of mighty deeds effaces the record of the useful, the beneficent, and the truly great.

THE FARNE ISLANDS.

THESE islands are situated on the coast of Northumberland, from five to seven miles to the south-east of Lindisfarne, or Holy Island; and to those who are acquainted with that portion of the great north road which traverses the county of Northumberland, the following remarks might be particularly addressed, viz.: that from the town of Alnwick these islands lie due north, at a distance of fifteen or sixteen miles; from Belford their situation is due east, and the distance five or six miles; and from Berwick-upon-Tweed their position is south-east (in the same direction with Holy Island), and the distance is about the same as that from these islands to Alnwick.

These islands, which consist, exclusive of many detached rocks, of seventeen in all, are generally classed under two heads, namely, the group nearest to the shore being named the Farne Islands, while the more distant group is known by the name of the Staples. But before entering upon a short account of the most noted of the islands in question, it may not be out of place to observe, that in nearly the whole extent of sea-coast along Northumberland, from the mouth of the Tyne to the mouth of the Tweed, clusters of rocks or rocky islets frequently occur; and there is no port or harbour of any magnitude—Blyth, a small town at the mouth of the little river of the same name, and Alnmouth, another village at the mouth of the river Aln, being the chief places of this description between Shields and Berwick-upon-Tweed. Such being the nature of the Northumberland coast, it has

acquired a bad reputation among sea-faring people; for although vessels commonly keep well out to sea, when strong gales happen to come on from the east and north-east it is not always practicable to steer clear of the dangerous rocks and islets, and many are the shipwrecks and disasters that have taken place from one extremity of this line of coast to the other.

The loss of the Forfarshire steam-vessel, which took place but a few years ago, upon one of the Farne Islands, and the courageous and praiseworthy exertions of the family (the Darlings) who had charge of the lighthouse and resided on the lone island, in rescuing a number of the passengers from a watery grave, cannot but be fresh in the memories of most of our readers; and notwithstanding these islands, from various reasons, some of which shall hereafter be explained, have for centuries past been considered among the "lions" of this quarter of the United Kingdom, since the shipwreck above referred to occurred the name of Grace Darling (old Darling's daughter, without whose assistance the boat could not have been worked by which so many lives were saved when the Forfarshire was wrecked) has attracted many strangers hither who otherwise probably would never have felt any interest in visiting them at all.

The distance of the islands from the mainland, that is, from that part of the coast upon which the village and castle of Bambrough are situated, is from two to seven miles. In the group lying nearer the coast, the largest of them, the name of which is House Island, containing about twelve acres of land, is situated; and from the elevated situation of some of the cliffs along this part of the shore, on a clear day a distinct view is not only had of the inner group, but the outline of several of the more distant ones may be pretty correctly traced. This island has received the appellation of 'House' from its having been the residence for some years of the famous Bishop Cuthbert, afterwards canonized and known as St. Cuthbert; and at the present day there are still visible the remains of some buildings, including those of a small church, which are supposed to point out the spot where this austere anchorite shut himself out from the world and all intercourse with his fellow-men, nor could be prevailed upon to return to his episcopal duties until King Egfrid had repaired to his retreat, and upon his bended knees, with tears of supplication, conjured him to undertake once more those duties he was so eminently qualified to fulfil. During his residence in this lone island, traditionary reports set forth that he had several combats with the devil, and some of them were of such a fierce and terrible character, that in the tremendous struggles between the resolute combatants the devil found it necessary to exert himself so much that his feet indented the solid rock; and at the present day, when the fishermen or other inhabitants of the neighbouring villages along this part of the coast undertake to ferry strangers to this and the rest of the islands, they never omit pointing out "his satanic majesty's footmarks" along the bare rocks of House Island; and so serious is their demeanour while doing so, that their firm belief in the combats above alluded to can scarcely for a moment be doubted. But in fact the memory of St. Cuthbert is still so much venerated by the inhabitants of these parts, that to discredit almost anything which redounds to the honour or credit of this their patron saint would, even in a perfect stranger, be looked upon as quite unpardonable. Among the other curiosities of this same island is a rude stone coffin, said to be the one in which the remains of St. Cuthbert were first deposited; but after his death, which took place here (for he relinquished his see a second time, and retired to his former retreat on this island, in which he died two months afterwards), his body, for greater security, was brought to Holy Island, where it was interred with much pomp and ceremony. But it was afterwards, in consequence of marauding excursions of the Danes and Norwegians, removed farther inland, from place to place, until the mortal remains of this popular saint of the north reached Durham, where they were permitted to rest. There is also a spring of water, and a chasm in the rocks, called 'the churn,' where the beating of the waves causes a great surging of the water, which sometimes rises to the height of fifty or sixty feet.

St. Cuthbert, it is said, had such a horror of women, from the conduct of the nuns and monks of some of the adjoining religious houses, that he would not tolerate them in his presence, and had a small chapel set apart for them in the monastery of Lindisfarne. Among the many stories related of this pious but singular man, the following is duly authenticated by several eminent writers and historians, and is thus related:—"Once, when St. Cuthbert was preaching in a certain village to a crowded audience, the alarm was given that there was one of the cottages on fire; this drew a number of people from the sermon to extinguish it, which was just what Satan proposed. The more water they threw on it, the more fiercely it seemed to burn, and all efforts to put it out seemed ineffectual. The saint, missing many of his auditors, inquired the cause; when leaving off his preaching and repairing to the scene of action, he perceived it was all illusion, and ordered a few drops of holy water to be sprinkled on it, on which the devil sneaked off, and the fire disappeared."

House Island and one or two others among the two groups afford a little scanty pasturage during the summer months; but except the person in charge of the lighthouse situated on one of the Staples has occasionally been known to take over a cow or two, when he has had a family, and a supply of milk was desirable, the pasturage is of so little value that it is seldom looked after. The islands do, however, produce something that is considered of more value than the scanty grass, that is, immense numbers of wild-fowl of various sorts, the eggs of which, as well as some of the birds themselves, are turned to a profitable account; they also produce a little kelp, and some few seals are occasionally met with. But the eggs and feathers of the aquatic tribes are considered by the owner of the islands the principal articles of value, and it is mainly in consideration of these that they are rented by some person or other residing upon the contiguous coast. Among the varieties of birds frequenting these islands in vast numbers, particularly during the breeding season, may be mentioned cormorants, auks, guillemots (of which there are two or three varieties), eider-ducks, gulls of several sorts, terns, sea-swallows, sea-larks, rock-larks, &c.

To persons unacquainted with the natural history of the various different tribes of the birds in question, a visit to the Farne Islands, particularly in the breeding season, can hardly fail of proving both highly instructive and interesting; for although they may probably have met with, somewhere or another, single specimens or small flocks of most of the kinds that colonise these rocky islets, the way in which they will here see the different tribes separating themselves into distinct colonies, and the immense numbers that congregate upon some of the small rocky islands, can scarcely be conceived without being seen. The first in point of value to the parties who rent the islands is the eider-duck (called St. Cuthbert's duck by the inhabitants of this part of the coast); but it is the down of this bird, rather than its flesh, that is accounted a luxury. Hence, if the former can be procured without destroying the bird, so much the better for those who turn them to a

profitable account. These birds lay their eggs in little hollows among the moss-covered stones that have at some time been thrown upon the margin of the little island by the raging of the waves of the North Sea, or in grassy tufts, where a few such happen to be found; but they are not contented with forming their nests with sea-weed, moss, or the other materials that the islands may chance to produce, but they actually pull a large quantity of the finest down from their own bodies, with which they give their nests an inner lining. As their nests are upon ground quite accessible to those who frequent the islands, considerable quantities of down are extracted from them; and when the supply of old birds is considered plentiful, the eggs as well as the down will be taken away in order that the females may presently commence laying a-fresh, and thus be induced a second time to deprive their bodies of a portion of its warm and valuable covering. These birds are so tame that they sometimes suffer themselves to be caught upon their nests.

One of the outer group is named the Pinnacles, from the numerous rocks rising to the height of forty or fifty feet; and it is here that the guillemots assemble and breed in great numbers. Here, along the ledges of rock, at various heights above the chafing of the ever-restless waves, these singular-looking birds arrange themselves in compact rows, and from their dark plumage interspersed with a little white, their ranks present a very curious appearance. These birds lay their eggs in the interstices of the rocks, but since there are but few situations connected with this their favourite island that cannot be approached by those who make a business of robbing them of their eggs, but comparatively a small portion of the colonists succeed in rearing their young. The sea-larks and sea-swallows are found by thousands on some of the smaller islands, that appear exclusively appropriated to themselves; and so crowded together are their nests, that during the months of May and June, when they are laying their eggs and hatching them, it is often very difficult to walk twenty yards without treading upon the eggs or the unfledged young. During the spring and early part of summer (except in stormy weather) these islands are visited every two or three days, so that the eggs may be gathered while fresh and marketable. The owners or the parties renting them find a difficulty in keeping off intruders and depredators; for during the moonlight nights, and at such times as the authorised parties are known or expected to be absent from the islands, the sort of persons alluded to will make excursions in some round-about way (frequently dropping down from Holy Island, distant in a north-westerly direction five or six miles), and not only pilfer the eggs, down, and such young broods as may be considered of any value, but will sometimes wantonly destroy the old birds, and trample upon the unfledged young ones, and the eggs that are under a state of incubation. In short, like most other poachers and depredators, they do not seem contented with carrying off whatever plunder they are able to obtain, but appear bent upon doing as much injury as possible to those whom they are robbing of their property.

In calm weather, particularly during the summer season, this part of the eastern coast is very subject to thick fogs, which greatly increase the dangers of a rocky shore; and notwithstanding there is a sufficient depth of water for coasting vessels in most of the channels separating these islands one from another, great danger is to be apprehended from sunken rocks, some of which show themselves at low water, while others, equally dangerous, lurk just beneath the surface, but never show their tops at all. Owing also to the peculiar position of some of the islands, the current of the tides is so strong, at certain periods of the ebb and flow, that the navigation is rendered not only difficult, but exceedingly dangerous, under the most favourable circumstances.

Emigrants in Canada.—From pretty close observation during the past eight years, I have come to the conclusion that the Scotch are the best and most successful of all emigrants. Come they with or without money, come they with great working sons or with only little useless girls, it is all the same: the Scotchman is sure to better his condition, and this very silently, and almost without a complaint. Of all the sons poor Scotchmen bring out with them, scarcely any become servants. I observe they work with and for their parents, till the latter are well stocked in and securely provided for, when these young men betake themselves to land on their own account. This is worthy of notice, and should be imitated by others, as the greatest advantages are derived from the family having a head in good circumstances, and ready with its assistance in times of need. The industry, frugality, and sobriety of the Scotch mainly contribute to their success; and such habits are absolutely necessary to be rigidly followed by poor settlers on first entering the "bush." I have carefully watched the progress and result of the Scotch, Irish, and English emigrants, in the race to the goal desired by all, namely, to obtain a deed for their land, and find that where all have appeared to me to be equally well mounted, and had precisely the same course to go over and the same hills of difficulty to ascend, the Scotchman is generally first in at the winning-post. Next to the Scotch, I am of opinion that the Englishman comes in for his meed of praise; but it is infinitely more difficult to speak of him than of his Scotch and Irish neighbours, as every shade and grade of character, conduct, and success is to be found amongst the English in this place and the neighbouring townships: suffice it to say, that were it not for a considerable number of good men from Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire, who are prospering in this part of Canada, I must have left my own countrymen to be noticed last. Generally speaking, English families do not hold together long enough to ensure success; the sons of poor English emigrants leave their parents, and become servants at the usual high wages, and, instead of saving money to purchase land, the same is squandered away in fine clothes and at the numerous country balls, &c. This course is followed up by taking a wife, becoming a common labourer, and hiring a smart house in the town, where he is determined his wife shall wear as rich a silk dress on a Sunday as any lady in the place. The lowest characters we have in Guelph, and pests they are, turn out to be English drunkards. I do not intend to make any attempts to deprive our Irishmen of their well-earned and well-known forte in making, occasionally, more noise than any other men when a little "high;" but, in common, I find them more at their farms, or at their respective callings, than the English are. The English "gentleman farmer," who lost, in a very few years, in the old country, nearly all he possessed on starting in life; and thus, by living beyond his means, neglecting his farm, and too hotly and constantly pursuing the hounds, comes to Canada a very unlikely man to succeed; such a man grumbles dreadfully at first, curses his hard fate, then the country, then the government, then the Canada Company, and every man who ever wrote a line or said a word in favour of Canada. Onward, however, he goes, by fits and starts, now determined to try, again to give up; but, after a few years, we hear less and see more of this man, because his mind is sobered down, and he looks upon things as they really are; he sees and feels that he is doing well in spite of himself; that he has an estate of his own, has no dread of "rent-day," nor landlord; has no tithe to pay, no poor-rate, and almost no taxes of any kind. Should crops fail, or prices be very low, we never see a farmer "break" or "fail" in this neighbourhood; and the reason is, because the outgoings of a farm are very small, and the farmer can easily reduce them to any extent he pleases till things go better. . . . . The rapid strides made by the plain, sober, hard-working English labourer or small farmer of the old country are truly worthy of our admiration and regard; with these men, capital seems not to be essentially necessary to their success.—*Dr. R. Alling, Emigration Agent at Guelph.*

Truth will ever be unpalatable to those who are determined not to relinquish error, but can never give offence to the honest and well-meaning; for the plain-dealing remonstrances of a friend differ as widely from the rancour of an enemy, as the friendly probe of a physician from the dagger of an assassin.—*E. W. Montague.*